



**September 20, 2016**  
**For Immediate Release**

## ***A SYSTEM IN CRISIS: AN INVESTIGATION OF WASHINGTON STATE'S TROUBLED FOSTER CARE SYSTEM***

New KCTS 9, *Crosscut* and *InvestigateWest* series explores the story behind the crisis in caring for Washington's vulnerable foster children

SEATTLE—KCTS 9, *Crosscut* and *InvestigateWest* today announced a new investigative series that goes beyond some startling statistics to reveal some unsettling truths. One in five kids in foster care in the United States will become homeless after age 18. By age 24, only 50% will be employed. Less than 3% will earn a college degree. The investigation conducted by *InvestigateWest* for KCTS 9 and *Crosscut* shows an uptick in foster children who move so often, for so long, that they have become what experts dub "homeless in foster care."

"We felt it was important to shine a light on some of the issues affecting foster youth in Washington State, said Robert I. Dunlop, President and CEO of Cascade Public Media. "In the course of this multilayered campaign, our team followed two young people who are aging out of foster care, telling their own compelling stories and, in the process, showing the human cost of a system that is urgently in need of reform."

"We're deeply touched by the stories of these young people and are thrilled to bring them to public attention with our partners at KCTS 9 and *Crosscut*," said Robert McClure, Executive Director of *InvestigateWest*.

The multimedia series includes:

- A series of articles based on well over a year of investigative reporting by *InvestigateWest*; the first, published September 20 on [Crosscut.com](http://Crosscut.com) and [KCTS9.org](http://KCTS9.org), details the growing crisis in managing foster youth caseloads due to a severe shortage in foster families, among other stresses to the system. The investigation included a review of state records and dozens of interviews with social workers, foster parents and others involved in the foster care system. Future stories

will further illuminate trends and fundamental flaws within the system affecting foster youth and foster families.

- *The Day I Age Out*, a three-part digital documentary by producer Bryan Tucker, traces the challenging transition out of foster care for two local youth. The documentary will launch September 27 on [KCTS9.org](http://KCTS9.org).
- A free community event, including a screening and panel discussion, on December 6 at 7:30 pm at Town Hall Seattle, 1119 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101. The panel of experts includes Snohomish County Prosecutor Adam Cornell, who was himself a foster youth; Rep. Ruth Kagi (D-Seattle), who was appointed to co-chair the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission to create a new department to support children and families; former Department of Social and Health Services employee Dee Wilson; and Foster Parents Association of Washington State Executive Director Mike Canfield. The panel, moderated by Town Hall Seattle Program Director and former KUOW reporter Katy Sewall, will address how the state can work to improve the system and what the Washington Legislature must do to implement needed changes. Details about the Town Hall event may be found at [KCTS9.org/events](http://KCTS9.org/events).

KCTS 9, *Crosscut* and *InvestigateWest* will engage the public and pertinent organizations through an ongoing social media awareness campaign, using the hashtag #FosterCrisis.

*The Day I Age Out* was made possible with the support of the Loeb Family Charitable Foundation.

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### **About KCTS 9**

KCTS 9 brings quality public media programming to the public when and where they need it—on the air, online, and in our communities—serving more than 2.2 million viewers each week in Western and Central Washington State, British Columbia and across Canada. To learn more about our programs and initiatives, visit [KCTS9.org](http://KCTS9.org).

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### **About Crosscut**

*Crosscut* is the Pacific Northwest's independent, reader-supported, nonprofit news site. We strive to provide readers with the facts and analysis they need to intelligently participate in civic discourse, and to create a more just, equitable and sustainable society. To learn more, visit [Crosscut.com](http://Crosscut.com).

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### **About InvestigateWest**

*InvestigateWest* is building a new way for citizens to support in-depth, public-interest reporting in the Pacific Northwest. Our nonprofit journalism studio depends on support from the public, philanthropists and our news partners. Please become part of the effort at [www.invw.org/donate](http://www.invw.org/donate).

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